

**Testimony in Support SB 4**  
**“AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S PRESENT**  
**AND FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS”**

**Allison Steele**  
**February 28, 2023**

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Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Allison Steele. I am a resident of New Haven, and a public health professional who studies housing and health equity at the Yale School of Public Health.

I am testifying in support of a rent cap and in support of SB 4, with changes to better protect tenants.

I have been working and volunteering with local housing agencies in New Haven for the past two years and have seen the dire circumstances some of our residents face when they lose their home to eviction or are forced to move because of rent hikes. This past summer I was interviewing clients of multiple housing agencies to better understand their perspectives on housing and health (specifically as it relates to the concept of tiny homes). One interview in particular stood out of a young woman of color in her early twenties living out of her car, working two jobs and unable to find any affordable housing to live in in the area in which she could still get to her job. Despite having the money for a deposit, and making enough money to cover the rent (although just barely), no landlord was willing to accept her application and she continued to live in her car. The lack of affordable housing in the state is beyond unacceptable and this bill is an important opportunity to help rectify this unjust system.

We know that Over 50% of renters in Connecticut are considered cost-burdened by their rent ([Connecticut Data Collaborative](#)) and this disproportionately affects women of color: as of 2020, two-thirds of Black women and Latina renters were cost-burdened, and the number has likely gone up since then ([DataHaven](#)). Not having access to stable, affordable housing is just the tip of the iceberg for the impact this has on people's lives and our community's prosperity. In the Health and Housing lab I work for, they found that a lack of affordable housing is a barrier to management of chronic conditions, specifically low-income renters with type 2 diabetes discussed the difficulties that housing insecurity caused in their efforts to prioritize their diabetes care, establish and maintain diabetes routines, and afford diabetes-related expenses.

Importantly, this bill must include good cause eviction for ALL residents, not just the elderly and disabled. Eviction has been linked to severe health impacts both in the short term and long term and for adults and children. If somebody experiences an eviction while pregnant, the fetus has higher odds of a premature birth, low birth weight, and death

(Khadka, 2020). Children who experience an eviction are more likely to not finish school, have poor educational outcomes, go to the hospital more, experience more food insecurity, and report poorer physical and mental health outcomes – we must do all we can to reduce the number of evictions that occur this state and this bill is the step in the right direction but needs to do more.

I strongly support a rent cap, but SB 4 would be stronger with the following changes:

- The cap should be lower—I suggest 2.5 or 3%. This tracks pre-pandemic average rent increases and would be affordable and predictable to tenants.
- It should cover apartments in between tenants so landlords can't push out tenants to increase the rent.
- It should expand good cause eviction protections to cover all tenants so they have greater stability in their homes.

Sincerely,

Allison Steele  
New Haven